

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7346

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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FOR EB/OA/AVP AND EUR/WE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, PFOR, MT, US

SUBJECT: FAA AVIATION MEDICAL EXAMINERS

REF: (A) STATE A-1082, MARCH 4, 1977,
(B) VALLETTA A-6, MARCH 21, 1977,
(C) STATE A-2291, MARCH 20, 1974,
(D) VALLETTA A-37, MARCH 29, 1974,

1. PERIODICALLY, THIS EMBASSY HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON CERTAIN MALTESE PHYSICIANS SO THAT THEY MIGHT BE DESIGNATED BY THE FAA AS AVIATION MEDICAL EXAMINERS.

2. IN 1974, THE TWO PHYSICIANS SO DESIGNATED WERE DR. VINCENT C. MORAN AND DR. PHILIP S. MUSCAT (REFS C AND D). RECENTLY, THE EMBASSY WAS ASKED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON TWO ADDITIONAL PHYSICIANS, DR. ABRAHAM GALEA AND DR. DANIEL MICALLEF, FOR THE FAA PROGRAM (REFS A AND B). THE EMBASSY WAS NOT AWARE THAT THIS NEW REQUEST MIGHT RESULT IN THE REVOCATION OF THE PREVIOUS DESIGNATIONS OF DR. MORAN AND DR. MUSCAT.

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3. BOTH DR. MORAN AND DR. MUSCAT ARE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (REPRESENTING THE MALTA LABOR PARTY). FOLLOWING THE 1976 GENERAL ELECTION, WHICH WAS WON BY THE LABOR PARTY, THEY EACH WERE APPOINTED AS MINISTERS OF THE GOVERNMENT AS WELL. DR. MORAN IS NOW SERVING AS MINISTER OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT, AND DR. MUSCAT IS MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

4. ON APRIL 19, MINISTERS MORAN AND MUSCAT CALLED ON THE AMBASSADOR TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT OF THEIR DESIGNATIONS AS FAA AVIATION MEDICAL EXAMINERS. EACH MINISTER HAD RECEIVED A LETTER (DATED APRIL 11) FROM JAMES L. HARRIS, CHIEF OF THE FAA AEROMEDICAL EDUCATION BRANCH IN OKLAHOMA CITY, INFORMING THEM THAT THEIR DESIGNATIONS HAD TO BE RESCINDED, AND ASKING THEM TO RETURN THEIR FAA IDENTIFICATION FORMS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS.

5. IT APPEARS THAT THIS ACTION WAS TAKEN AFTER THE FAA WAS INFORMED THAT THE MALTESE LABOR GOVERNMENT PROHIBITS ITS MEMBERS FROM ENGAGING IN PRIVATE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE WHILE SERVING AS MINISTERS. ACCORDINGLY, FAA APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO REPLACE DR. MORAN AND DR. MUSCAT AS MEDICAL EXAMINERS WITH TWO OTHER MALTESE PHYSICIANS.

6. MINISTERS MORAN AND MUSCAT INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD THE REASONING BEHIND THE FAA ACTION, AND THEY HAD NO OBJECTION WHATSOEVER TO DR. GALEA AND DR. MICALLEF BEING DESIGNATED BY THE FAA AS MEDICAL EXAMINERS.

7. HOWEVER, THEY STATED THAT THEY ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE PROFESSIONAL IMPORTANCE TO THEIR OWN DESIGNATIONS, AND THEY ASKED THE AMBASSADOR IF THERE MIGHT NOT BE SOME WAY FROM THEM TO RETAIN THESE, RATHER THAN HAVING THEM RESCINDED.

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8. THE MINISTERS EMPHASIZED THAT, WHILE IT WAS TRUE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AS MINISTERS DID NOT PERMIT THEM TO ENGAGE DIRECTLY IN PRIVATE MEDICAL PRACTICE, THEY DID MAINTAIN THEIR FULL STANDING WITHIN THE MALTESE MEDICAL PROFESSION. FURTHERMORE, THEIR STATUS AS MINISTERS INEVITABLY WAS A LIMITED ONE, AND COULD CHANGE AT ANY TIME. WHEN AND IF THAT HAPPENED, THEY WOULD RESUME THEIR PRIVATE MEDICAL PRACTICES IMMEDIATELY.

9. THEREFORE, THE MINISTERS ASKED IF THE AMBASSADOR WOULD CONTACT THE FAA TO DETERMINE IF IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THEIR DESIGNATIONS AS MEDICAL EXAMINERS TO BE RETAINED, BUT IN AN INACTIVE STATUS, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THEY RELINQUISHED THEIR MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES. THEREAFTER, WHEN THEY BEGAN PRIVATE MEDICAL PRACTICE AGAIN, THEY ALSO COULD RESUME THEIR SERVICES AND OBLIGATIONS TO THE FAA AS WELL. IN THE MEANWHILE, DR. GALEA AND DR. MICALLEF COULD MEET ALL OF THE FAA

REQUIREMENTS IN MALTA. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED TO ASK THE FAA IF THEIR REQUEST COULD BE APPROVED UNDER FAA REGULATIONS.

10. ACTION REQUESTED. MINISTERS MORAN AND MUSCAT OBVIOUSLY ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THEIR FAA DESIGNATIONS, AS A STATUS SYMBOL IN THIS VERY STATUS CONSCIOUS COUNTRY. IF THEY CAN BE RETAINED AS FAA EXAMINERS ON AN INACTIVE BASIS, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY DESIRABLE TO DO SO. ALTERNATIVELY, IF FAA REGULATIONS PERMIT THE APPOINTMENT OF MORE THAN TWO EXAMINERS, PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER TO CONTINUE THE ACTIVE DESIGNATION OF ALL FOUR OF THE MALTESE PHYSICIANS INVOLVED. IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF THE DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTACT FAA AND ADVISE THE EMBASSY TELEGRAPHICALLY IF EITHER OF THESE ALTERNATIVES CAN BE APPROVED. LAINGEN

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